

17 March 1977

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Student Troubles in Turkey

1. Violent clashes between right- and left-wing students that began during the 1974-75 academic year continue with disturbing frequency in most major cities. The violence has disrupted or paralyzed large segments of the higher education system and has resulted in scores of deaths and injuries. But while there is concern over what many Turks see as a national disgrace, the country seems to have become inured to the phenomenon--perhaps as much as anything because the violence is largely isolated from most people. Thus national leaders have not felt a need to institute the tough measures necessary to curb the problem.

2. The current campus disorders are similar in many ways to those that plagued Turkey from 1968 to 1971 and contributed to the military ouster of then Prime Minister Demirel. There are some significant differences, however:

- the extremists now seem more fully occupied with each other and have less time for larger political issues;
- a much smaller proportion of the student population is involved;
- there is no significant urban terrorism or labor unrest.

3. Campus unrest has a long history in Turkey. It increased dramatically in the 1960s with the availability of Marxist literature and the example of student discontent

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